

## REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The present Amendment is responsive to the non-final Office Action mailed August 13, 2007 in the above-identified application.

Claims 1-8 and 10-14 are the claims currently pending in the present application.

Claims 1, 3 and 11 are amended to clarify features recited thereby. The amendments to the claims are fully supported by the Applicant's disclosure, see for example, Specification, page 1, lines 28-29, page 3, lines 17-26, page 5, lines 15-22 and page 6, lines 24-26. Further, claim 13 is amended to remove a typographical error.

### *Rejection of Claims 1-5 and 10-14 under 35 U.S.C. §102*

Claims 1-5 and 10-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by McManigal, U.S. Patent No. 5,040,714. Reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 11 require a flanged end with a first end surface concave in the radial direction over at least an area that is subjected to deformation when the flanged member is assembled together with the second flanged member.

McManigal discloses a sealed coupling including a bore (McManigal Abstract), and a sealing/load-transferring surface that is concave. McManigal discloses that the protrusions 14a and 15a are shaped "so as to compressively deform the annular seal 16" as shown in Figure 2A (McManigal, column 4, lines 4-7).

Thus, McManigal discloses that the gasket or seal deforms (McManigal, column 4, lines 4-7, 55-59, 62-64 and column 5, lines 26-29 and 34-36), but does not disclose or suggest flanges that deform, let alone an end surface of a flange that is concave in the radial direction over at least an area which is subjected to deformation, as required by claims 1 and 11.

Without intending to limit the scope of the claims, according to an aspect of Applicant's invention, an effect or advantage of Applicant's invention as claimed in claims 1 and 11 is that a flange member is provided with an inclined end surface that is prepared against a convex bulging of the end surface caused by forces or loads over time. McManigal does not disclose or suggest

an apparatus that embodies such features and, accordingly, McManigal does not disclose or suggest the recitations of claims 1 and 11.

Claims 2-5, 10 and 14 depend from independent claim 1, and claims 12 and 13 depend from claim 11. Accordingly, claims 2-5, 10 and 12-14 are patentably distinguishable over the cited art for at least the same reasons.

***Rejection of Claims 1-7 and 11-14 under 35 U.S.C. §102***

Claims 1-7 and 11-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Schindler et al., U.S. Patent No. 2,739,828. Reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 11 require a flanged member with a first flanged end with a first end surface forming a load transferring surface through which forces are transferred when assembled together with a corresponding end surface of a flanged end of another flanged member of the flanged joint, at least a portion of said first end surface in an unstressed condition being concave in a radial direction, such that said at least the portion of said first end surface is curved and defined by a concave curve function.

Schindler discloses a pipe connector with a flexible material joint, and discloses sealing or load-transferring surfaces that are planar (Schindler, Figure 5).

Schindler does not disclose or suggest a flanged member with a first flanged end with a first flanged end surface forming a load transferring surface through which forces are transferred when assembled, as required by claims 1 and 11. Accordingly, Schindler does not disclose or suggest recitations of claims 1 and 11.

Claims 2-7 and 14 depend from claim 1, and claims 12 and 13 depend from claim 11. Therefore, claims 2-7 and 12-14 are patentably distinguishable over the cited art for at least the same reasons.

***Rejection of Claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. §103***

Claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being obvious from McManigal. Reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully requested.

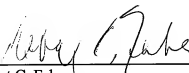
Claim 8 depends from claim 1. As discussed, McManigal does not disclose or suggest the recitations of claim 1, and therefore claim 8 is patentably distinguishable over McManigal for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

In view of the foregoing remarks, withdrawal of the objections and the rejections and allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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